

The natural environment in post-conflict peacebuilding Northern Uganda

Maria Andrea Nardi

Lund University / RWI

21 November 2022

**Workshop: The Nature of Peace – New Directions
in Environmental Peacebuilding Research**

Pufendorf Institute for Advanced Studies, Lund, Sweden



Entering the Northern region of Uganda crossing
the Victoria Nile on the way to Gulu from
Kampala. Photo by Maria Andrea Nardi, 2014

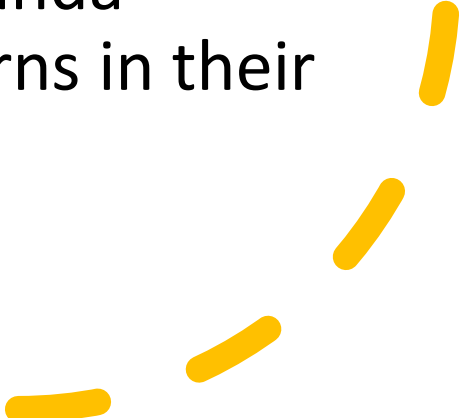
Methodological approach: explorative

- Interdisciplinary
 - Socio-economic geography, physical geography, human rights
- Mixed methods approach
 - Quantitative – qualitative integration
 - Diverse quali approaches: document analysis, literature review
- Where (& when) is the field?
 - Remote sensing analysis
 - Online survey and online interviews
 - Where is participation?

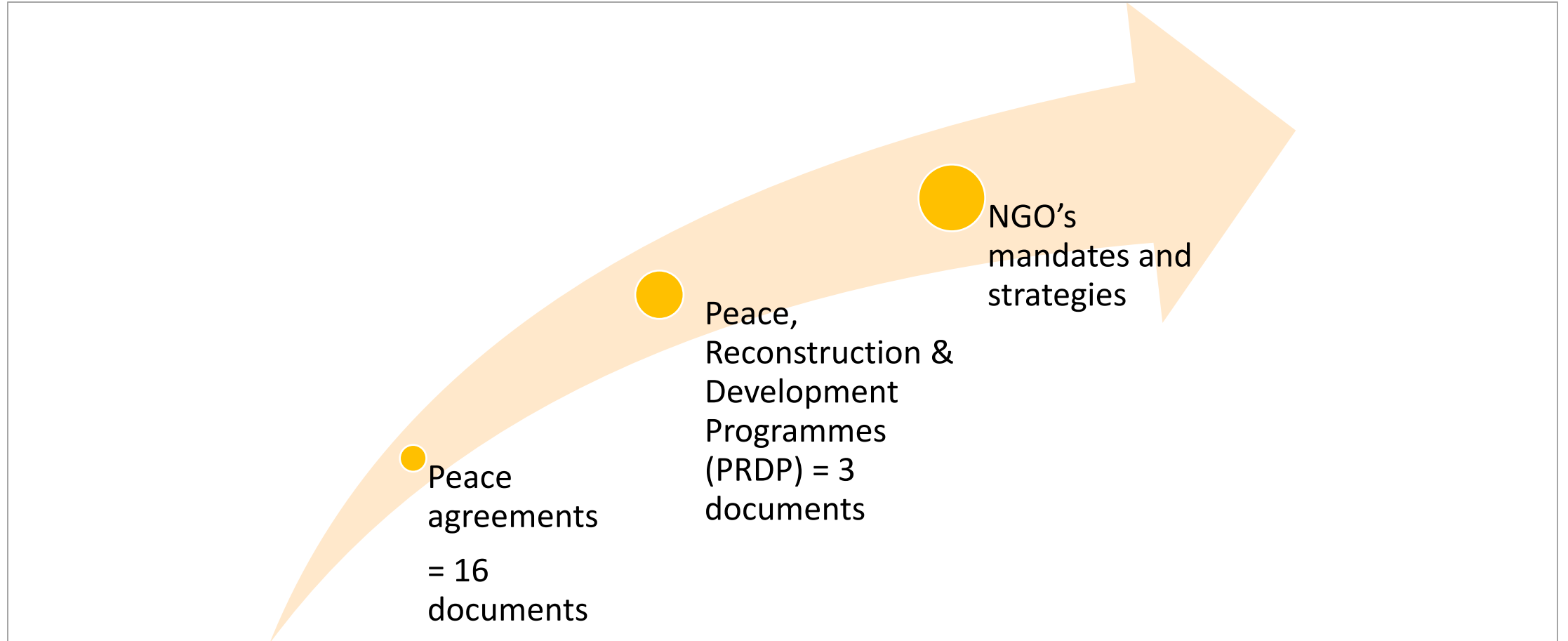
Long ethical review process
COVID19 travel restriction
Building trust and mutual relations of
interest takes time!

A large orange circle on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

Integration of environmental concerns in post-conflict peacebuilding

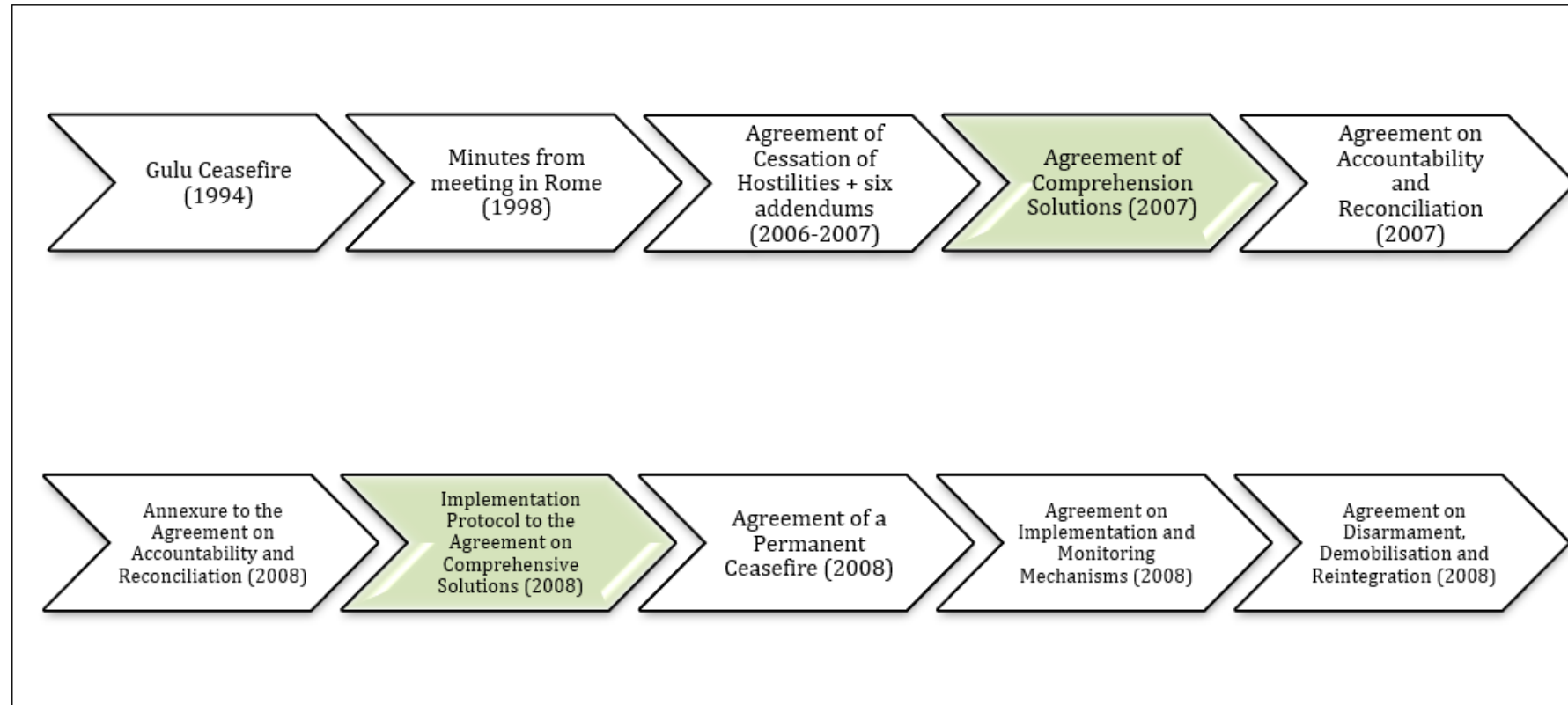
- How was the natural environment integrated in peacemaking?
 - How did the GoU integrate the natural environment in peacebuilding, reconstruction, and development policies and strategies?
 - How are NGO active in north Uganda integrating environmental concerns in their mandates and strategies?
- 
- A series of four yellow curved dashes in the bottom right corner, arranged in a diagonal line from bottom-left to top-right.

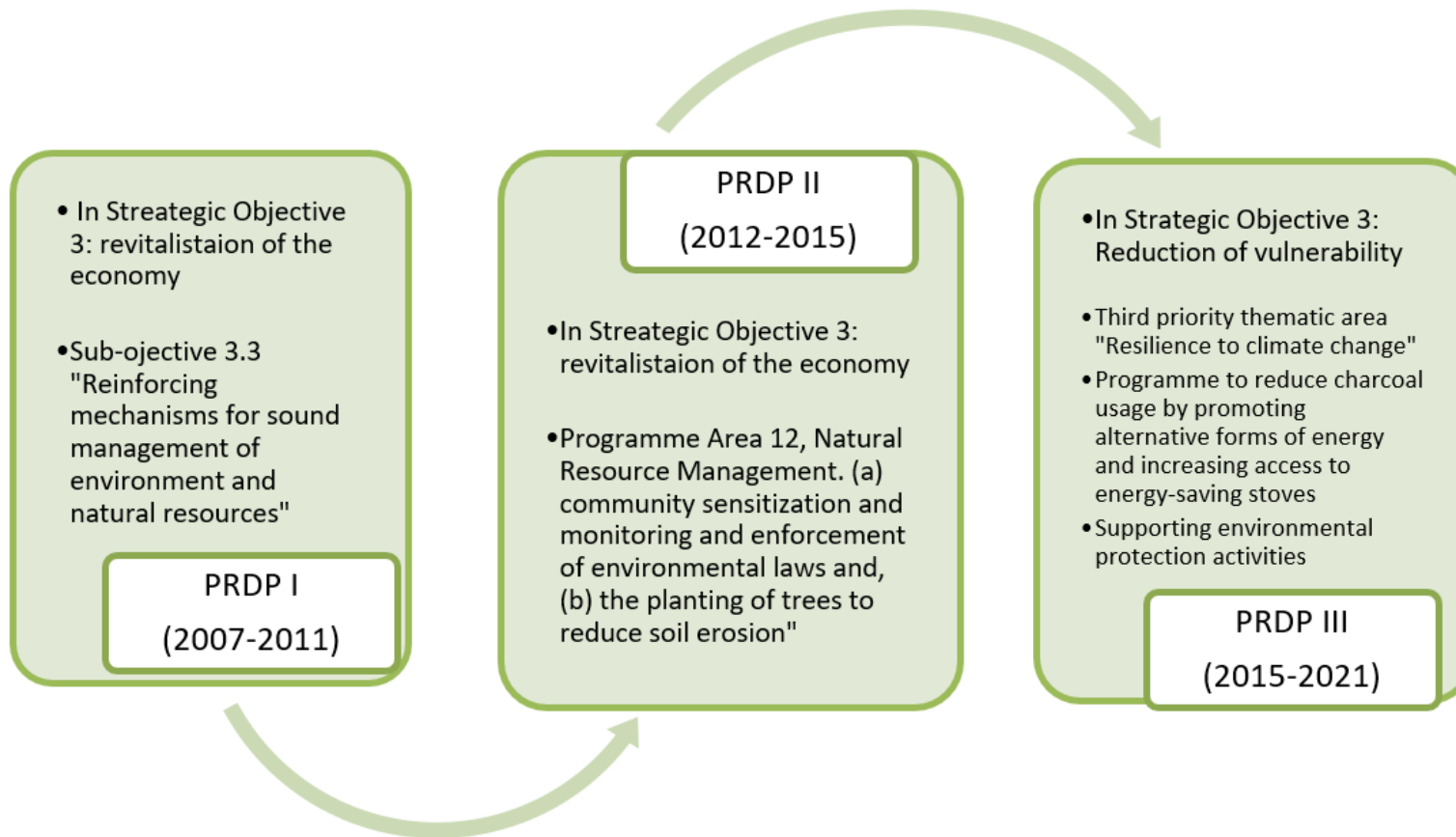
Peace agreements & policies



Integration in peace-making

- E: Economic and Social Development of North and North Eastern Uganda
- 14.6 “the conflict (...) has caused significant environmental degradation. ... measures shall be taken to restore and manage the environment sustainability”





When and how is nature integrated in post-conflict policies?

How do local communities integrate the natural environment in their everyday life?

Semiotic
system

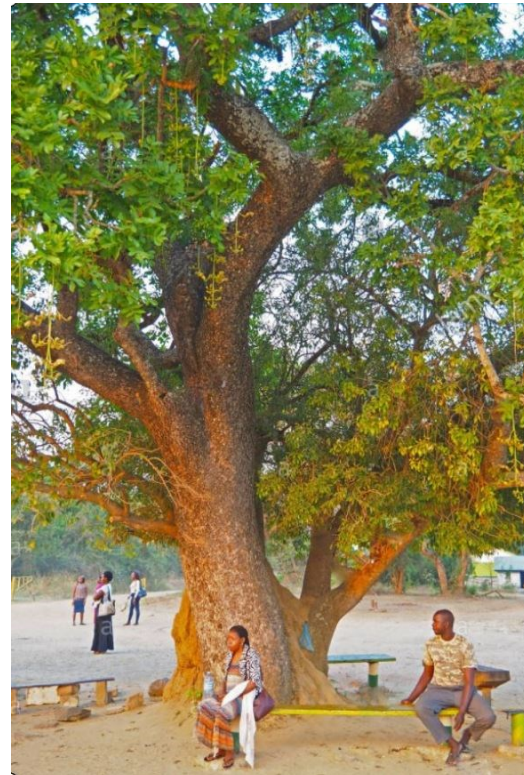
Public
space

Healing



The Acacia tree: The boundary between Karamoja and

Source: Bainomugisha, Okello & Ngoya (2007:19)



Source: Dennis Cox, in Alamy Stock Photo



Source: Flickr. Copyright © 2010 Justice and Reconciliation Project

Peace without justice?

Agreement on Accountability & Reconciliation

- Reconciliation: restoring broken relations and re-establishing harmony
- Alternative justice mechanisms

Traditional justice

- “such as *culo kwor*, *mato oput*, *kayo cuk*, *ailuc* and *tonu ci koka* and others as practiced in the communities affected by the conflict, shall be promoted ... as a central part of the framework for accountability and reconciliation”

Environmental & social consequences

- What happened to the natural environment in Northern Uganda? (= next presentation!)
- What are the drivers of environmental change?
- What are the social consequences?



ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICTS

Commodifying nature & new displacements

Disputes over access, use, and ownership of land

Charcoal over exploitation

Agribusiness: monoculture plantation

Oil and mineral exploration and exploitation

Environmental conflicts in different scales (migration, climate change)



Photo: Jennifer Huxta, The Guardian

Sustainable peace?

- Northern Uganda post-conflict peacebuilding & 'development' needs to be understood in the context of the **expansion of the resource frontier** from the south of the country
- There is an **unequal ecological exchange** between the south and north of Uganda: nature (soil, water, fossil fuel, timber) is shipped out from war torn north to Kampala
- **Against peace agreements** signed to promote "national unity, equality, peaceful and harmonious co-existence"



Lessons learnt for environmental peacebuilding research & policy

- Environmental concerns should be integrated early during the peace making process
- Incorporate local understandings of “nature” in strategies, policies and legal frameworks, but also in research
- Integrate diverse justice principles: traditional forms of justice that could honour peace agreements, motorised real sustainable peace and protect the natural environment